



Funding Research Update – December

Governor's Office of Education Innovation

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Student Weights

»» Why?

Student Weights

- ▶ Student weights are designed to...
 - Allocate additional money to students who require greater resources to educate
 - ELL Weights
 - Poverty Weights
 - Special Education Weights
 - Gifted Program Weights
 - Allocate additional money to LEAs with greater costs
 - Small & Very Small School Adjustments
 - Rural School Adjustments
 - Allocate additional money to instructional programs
 - Move On When Reading
 - Dropout Prevention Programs
 - Grade-level Student Weights

Student Weights

- ▶ Why the specific weights and specific values?
 - Research
 - What practices/programs influence student outcomes?
 - Policy
 - How much does it cost to fund certain practices/programs?

Student Weights

- ▶ Why change/streamline the weights?
 - To increase transparency/understandability
 - To increase equity among LEAs
 - Local options (outside the formula)
 - Impact Aid (Federal) (outside the formula)
 - Small School Adjustment (outside the formula)
 - To influence state/school/student outcomes
- ▶ These three aims are not necessarily related.

Student Weights

- ▶ How can the state increase the transparency of the school finance formula?
 - Change how it is reported
 - Create materials to educate school, the public, and lawmakers
- ▶ For example, change the lowest base support level to 1.0 (from 1.158) and adjust all other weights accordingly.

Student Weights

- ▶ Where is the “factor of five” (per pupil funding) coming from?
 - Local Options (outside the formula)
 - Extremely Small Schools
 - Weight Adjustment
 - Lump Sum (outside the formula)
 - Impact Aid (Reservation Schools) (outside the formula)

Student Weights

- ▶ How can we influence state/school/student outcomes?
 - Change how money is spent in the state/schools/classrooms
- ▶ How can we change how money is spent in the state/schools/classrooms?
 - Provide incentives for changing outcomes
 - Attach strings to allocated dollars

Student Weights

- ▶ If the state were to change the weights used to allocate school funding, would that change educational outcomes?
 - The ultimate decision of how dollars are spent is made at a local level
 - It isn't clear how dollars are currently being spent most effectively
 - Research proposed for taskforce at previous meeting

The Real Research Question

- ▶ How are effective schools spending their dollars?
- ▶ What does it cost in Arizona to educate different populations?

How Do We “Fix” School Finance?

- ▶ This question often hides the assumption that changing the school finance formula would change student outcomes.
- ▶ There are two pieces to this question:
 - Is money distributed fairly?
 - In AZ the answer is, within the formula, yes.
 - Is money appropriate for desired programs?
 - This is a more difficult question to answer, but the proposed research will be a good start

Recommendations

- ▶ Do not change funding formula
 - Adjust the base weight to 1
 - Clarify weights
- ▶ Continue with research project on how money is spent, not how it is allocated
 - This will help answer the question of whether the amounts allocated are appropriate for different populations